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Volunteers add value to Farm Center services

In April, the Farm Center hosted the annual volunteer update training at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Each year, the Farm Center provides a 10-hour, two-day training for those individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to the agricultural producers of Wisconsin. Currently, 39 farm center volunteer advisors and 26 volunteer mediators work directly with farmers in Wisconsin to provide financial counseling, assistance with basic human services and mediation services.

This year's training focused on the importance of transition planning, current bankruptcy issues, the Affordable Care Act and the new farm bill. Volunteer mediator Sue Bronson provided a special session on the science and art of communication as it pertains to

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Invite the Farm Center to your event



The Wisconsin Farm Center staff is willing to speak to any events or meetings about issues related to farming in Wisconsin.

Past topics include Farm Center services including transition planning, estate planning, mediation, support for beginning and minority farmers and dairy herd diagnostics.

mediation.

The update training not only provides the opportunity for the volunteers to keep current on issues crucial to their roles but a chance to reconnect with each other at least once a year.

The Wisconsin Farm Center is fortunate to have these talented and dedicated individuals offering their time and talents to the farmers of Wisconsin.

For more information, call or email John DuPuis at 608-224-5138 or john.dupuis@wisconsin.gov.



Minority Farmer program gaining momentum

During the winter and early spring of 2014, the Minority Farmer Program hosted six workshops about food safety as well as disease and pest management for farmers in Eau Claire, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Sheboygan and Wausau. More than 100 Hmong farmers attended these workshops.

Farm Center staff also coordinated and led nearly 60 Hmong farmers to the 2014 MOSES Organic Farming Conference in February and held the first Wisconsin Ginseng Growers Conference with Ginseng Board of Wisconsin in March. More than 40 Hmong ginseng growers attended the conference. In both cases, we broke the record for the number of Hmong growers

We welcome audiences of any size. We will not charge you for our time. We appreciate the opportunity to educate Wisconsin residents about our services and about the needs of Wisconsin's farmers.

Call the Farm Center
at 1-800-942-2474 or
email
farmcenter@wisconsin.gov.

participating at these events.

The Minority Farmer Program is designed to reach out to minority farmers in Wisconsin to minimize the language and/or cultural barriers they face when accessing resources for farm investments, business planning and risk management.

For more information, call or email Jack Chang at 608-224-5050 or jack.chang@wisconsin.gov



2015 Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20 Producer Grant Update

DATCP in May awarded 43 grants of up to \$5,000 to dairy farmers seeking to improve production or plan farm transitions.

At this time, we anticipate awarding additional 30x20 grants in the fall. If you want to be ready to apply when grants are announced, the Farm Center's best advice is to prepare a detailed, complete project budget. Think through what you want to do, talk to potential contractors/consultants and do your best to get firm numbers on your proposed project. This will put you in a good position to compete for the 30x20 money when it becomes available again.

Contact Grow Wisconsin Dairy at 855-943-2479 or GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov with specific questions.



Welcome to the Farm Center, John Gasner

John is a native of Oregon, Wisconsin and earned a degree in finance from UW-Eau Claire. He spent six years working in a number of roles at John Deere Financial while also earning his MBA with an emphasis in Accounting. John is ready to help you improve your farm's business plan or transition plan.

Call him at 1-608-224-5051 or email john.gasner@wisconsin.gov.

Highlights of the 2014 Farm Bill

It takes time and research to understand the services available through the 2014 Farm Bill. Many agencies, including the Wisconsin Farm Center, can help.

Here are a few highlights of the bill:

The information about the following two loan programs comes from the Farm Service Agency. FSA has a number of [fact sheets](#) about specific programs.

Farm Operating Direct and Guaranteed Loan Programs provide low-interest financing to buy farm operating inputs. The revisions expand the types of entities eligible. Newly eligible entities include family trusts, limited liability corporations and those with an “embedded entity structure” (one entity owned wholly or partly by another entity). The loan programs also provide favorable interest rates for joint financing arrangements, increase loan limits for microloans, make youth loans available in urban areas (previously only youth living in rural areas were eligible) and eliminate term limits for guaranteed operating loans.

Farm Ownership Direct and Guaranteed Loan Programs provide low-interest financing to buy farms.

The 2014 Farm Bill revisions expand the types of entities eligible, provide favorable interest rates for joint financing arrangements, provide a larger percent guarantee on guaranteed conservation loans, increase the loan limits for the down payment program and authorize a re-lending program to help Native American producers buy fractionated interests of land.

Next is information for dairy farmers about the new **Margin Protection Program**. Learn more [here](#).

The main feature of the new Farm Bill Dairy Title is the Dairy Producer Margin Protection Program. The program is a new and unique safety net that will provide dairy farmers with indemnity payments when actual dairy margins are below margin coverage levels the producer chooses on an annual basis.

Grain farmers may choose between individual or county **Agricultural Risk Coverage**. Learn more [here](#).

Learn about the Farm Center's Herd-Based Diagnostics Program

Did you see the article in the June/July 2014 Wisconsin Farm Bureau's "Rural Route" magazine? Read it online [here](#).